

MTA-1024
5 October 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- Tel Aviv Bureau -- September 1981

I. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

Israeli Prime Minister Menahem Begin was the center of attention for the Hebrew Section during most of the month. On 6 September he departed for the United States, accompanied by his foreign, defense and interior ministers, and after visiting in New York arrived at the White House on 9 September. Jerusalem radio carried live coverage of the arrival ceremony, including remarks by Begin and President Reagan. The broadcast was typical of the intense Israeli media coverage of the trip, much of which focused on the "strategic cooperation" agreement arranged by the two countries and on Begin's meetings with Reagan on the 9th and 10th. Begin returned to Israel on the 16th and gave an airport news conference. The journey resulted in the wire-filing of many items reflecting a wide spectrum of political opinion in Israel.

Other key issues during the month included Begin's endorsement of a proposal by Defense Minister Sharon calling for separate civilian and military administrations in the occupied territories. Jerusalem radio on 24 September said the plan "is a very good idea and will foster a sense of mutual respect between Israel and the residents of the territories."

On 28 September, the eve of the Jewish new year, Jerusalem radio carried a 55-minute interview with Begin, and another 30-minute interview was carried on Jerusalem television. The bureau filed excerpts from these two interviews plus the full text of a lengthy interview granted to the MA'ARIV newspaper.

Israeli-Egyptian normalization negotiations resumed during the month, as did the long-stalled autonomy negotiations. Jerusalem radio reported that several issues, including motor transportation, tourism and the coordination of television frequencies were discussed at the normalization talks. A communique on the 24th of September upon conclusion of the opening round of the renewed autonomy meeting contained a pledge by both sides to commit themselves to continuing efforts to draw the Palestinians "closer to the negotiating table."

During the month the Turkish Section translated a 10-installment report to the Turkish Communist Party Central Committee by party Secretary General I. Bilen. The report, broadcast by the clandestine Voice of the Turkish Communist Party and processed in 28 takes, described Bilen's views on internal Turkish political developments and the struggle to overcome the present government and on the party's policy regarding Turkey's relations with other countries.

On 26 September the Turkish Section began covering three Moscow in Turkish casts daily for London Bureau while the latter's Turkish monitor was on annual leave.

On 5 September the Embassy received a bomb threat from an anonymous caller, as a result of which the bureau was evacuated. Israeli emergency ordnance personnel were called to the scene and a camera was found on the side of the building. Police destroyed the camera with an explosive device but it was later determined to have been harmless.

On 12 September a handgrenade attack on a group of Italian tourists in Jerusalem's Old City resulted in the death of two men and injuries to 27 other persons. This was the second time in recent months that tourists have died as a result of attacks in the Old City by what Jerusalem radio described as "terrorists." In the earlier incident a West German man was shot in the head while walking on the Via Dolorosa. The Old City is a favourite spot for visitors to Israel and is often visited by bureau personnel.

A. Lateral Services

The Puget Sound, flagship of the Sixth Fleet, and three other ships visited the Israeli port of Ashdod for 2 weeks beginning on 12 September. At Ambassador Samuel Lewis' request, the bureau wirefiled Israeli items to the commander of the fleet while the ships were in port.

Counselor for Political Affairs Paul Hare on 15 September became the third local consumer to receive the bureau's nightly Mabab television "package," which consists of a program summary plus copies of each item processed from the cast or repeated on the cast but processed from an earlier source. The ambassador and the deputy chief of mission began receiving the package in April and have reported to the bureau that they find it to be a useful tool for keeping track of major Israeli developments without having to wade through a lengthy pile of copy. Their interest in this particular program is based on the fact that it is the most widely watched TV program in Israel.

II. ENGINEERING

Regional Engineering [] visited the bureau from STAT 22 through 27 September. He reviewed the status of ongoing engineering projects and compiled a new list of tasks for the bureau's two local

technicians. The visit included a trip to the remote antenna site in Galon by [REDACTED]

STAT

On 21 September two battery-operated Sony receivers were placed in the Hebrew booth to be used during the bureau's frequent power outages. One is a standard radio-cassette recorder but the second includes TV, providing the bureau with its first capability to monitor and record the audio of Jerusalem TV during power outages.

III. VISITS

[REDACTED] career management officer, visited the bureau from 6-12 September. All staffers at the bureau held individual discussions with the CMO. STAT

[REDACTED] chief of the Budget & Fiscal Branch of E&PS, visited the bureau from 7-9 September. STAT

[REDACTED] middle east regional engineer from Nicosia, visited the bureau 22-27 September. STAT

Nicosia Bureau Deputy Chief [REDACTED] paid a brief visit to the bureau on 11 September while on a private visit to Israel. STAT

IV. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

[REDACTED] families visited the ships of the U.S. SIXTH FLEET during their 2-week port call in Ashdod. STAT

A new embassy commissary board was elected by U.S. Embassy Association members during the month, but no FBIS candidate was elected.

[REDACTED]
Chief, Tel Aviv Bureau

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Attachments: A. Production Report
B. Filed Wordage Report
C. Communications Report